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Instagram makes teen accounts private as pressure mounts on the app to protect children

By BARBARA ORTUTAY

AP Technology Writer

Instagram is making teen accounts private by default as it tries to make the platform safer for children amid a growing backlash against how social media affects young people's lives.

Beginning Tuesday in the U.S., U.K., Canada and Australia, anyone under 18 who signs up for Instagram will be placed into restrictive teen accounts and those with existing accounts will be migrated over the next 60 days. Teens in the European Union will see their accounts adjusted later this year.

Parent company Meta acknowledges that teenagers may lie about their age and says it will require them to verify their ages in more instances, like if they try to create a new account with an adult birthday. The Menlo Park, California company also said it is building technology that proactively finds teen accounts that pretend to be grownups and automatically places them into the restricted teen accounts. The teen accounts will be private by default. Private messages are restricted so teens can only receive them from people they follow or are already connected to. "Sensitive content," such as videos of people fighting or those



The Instagram logo is seen on a cell phone in Boston, Oct. 14, 2022.

Associated Press

promoting cosmetic procedures, will be limited, Meta said. Teens will also get notifications if they are on Instagram for more than 60 minutes and a "sleep mode" will be enabled that turns off notifications and sends auto-replies to direct messages from 10 p.m. until 7 a.m.

While these settings will be turned on for all teens, 16 and 17-year-olds will be

able to turn them off. Kids under 16 will need their parents' permission to do so. "The three concerns we're hearing from parents are that their teens are seeing content that they don't want to see or that they're getting contacted by people they don't want to be contacted by or that they're spending too much time on the app," said Naomi Gleit, head of product at

Meta. "So teen accounts is really focused on addressing those three concerns." The announcement comes as the company faces lawsuits from dozens of U.S. states that accuse it of harming young people and contributing to the youth mental health crisis by knowingly and deliberately designing features on Instagram and Facebook that addict children to its plat-

forms. While Meta didn't give specifics on how the changes might affect its business, the company said the changes may mean that teens will use Instagram less in the short term. Emarketer analyst Jasmine Enberg said the revenue impact of the changes "will likely be minimal."

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Instagram makes teen accounts private as pressure mounts on the app to protect children

Continued from Front

"Even as Meta continues to prioritize teen safety, it's unlikely that it's going to make sweeping changes that would cause a major financial hit," she said, adding that the teen accounts are unlikely to significantly affect how engaged teens are with Instagram "not in the least because there are still plenty of ways to circumvent the rules, and could even make them more motivated to work around the age limits."

New York Attorney General Letitia James said Meta's announcement was "an important first step, but much more needs to be done to ensure our kids are protected from the harms of social media." James' office is working with other New York officials on how to implement a new state law intended to curb children's access to what critics call addictive social media feeds.

Others were more critical. Nicole Gil, the co-founder and executive director of the nonprofit Accountable Tech, called Instagram's announcement the "latest attempt to avoid actual independent oversight and regulation and instead continue to self-regulate, jeopardizing the health, safety, and privacy of young people."



Students use their cellphones as they leave for the day the Ramon C. Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts High School in downtown Los Angeles, Aug. 13, 2024.

Associated Press

ple."

"Today's PR exercise falls short of the safety by design and accountability that young people and their parents deserve and only meaningful policy action can guarantee," she said. "Meta's business model is built on addicting its users and mining their data for profit; no amount of parental and teen controls Meta is proposing will change that."

Sen. Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.), the co-author of the Kids Online Safety Act that recently passed the Senate, questioned the timing

of the announcement "on the eve of a House markup" of the bill.

"Just like clockwork, the Kids Online Safety Act moves forward and industry comes out with a new set of self-enforcing guidelines," she said.

In the past, Meta's efforts at addressing teen safety and mental health on its platforms have also been met with criticism that the changes don't go far enough. For instance, while kids will get a notification when they've spent 60 minutes on the app, they will be able to bypass it and

continue scrolling.

That's unless the child's parents turn on "parental supervision" mode, where parents can limit teens' time on Instagram to a specific amount of time, such as 15 minutes.

With the latest changes, Meta is giving parents more options to oversee their kids' accounts. Those under 16 will need a parent or guardian's permission to change their settings to less restrictive ones. They can do this by setting up "parental supervision" on their accounts and connecting them to a parent or guardian.

Nick Clegg, Meta's president of global affairs, said last week that parents don't use the parental controls the company has introduced in recent years.

Meta's Gleit said she thinks the teen accounts will incentivize parents to start using them.

"Parents will be able to see, via the family center, who is messaging their teen and hopefully have a conversation with their teen," she said. "If there is bullying or harassment happening, parents will have visibility into who their teen's following, who's following their teen, who their teen has messaged in the past seven days and hopefully have some of these conversations and help them navigate these really difficult situations online."

U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy said last year that tech companies put too much responsibility on parents when it comes to keeping children safe on social media.

"We're asking parents to manage a technology that's rapidly evolving that fundamentally changes how their kids think about themselves, how they build friendships, how they experience the world — and technology, by the way, that prior generations never had to manage," Murthy said in May 2023. □



Congress members hammer in the first nails at the First Nail Ceremony marking the beginning of construction of the 2025 Presidential Inauguration platform on the steps of the Capitol, Wednesday, Sept. 18, 2024, in Washington.

Associated Press

By STEPHEN GROVES and MARY CLARE JALONICK
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Work on the presidential inauguration platform began

Work has begun on an inauguration stage at the Capitol. The last one became part of Jan. 6 attack

Wednesday at the U.S. Capitol with congressional leaders pounding the first ceremonial nails into a stage they cast as a symbol of America's commitment to the peaceful transfer of power — a tradition that was almost upended in 2021 when Donald Trump's supporters violently stormed the Capitol.

As Republican and Democratic leaders gathered in a moment of bipartisanship with Washington's National Mall spread before them, no

direct mention was made of the Jan. 6, 2021, attack where Trump's supporters used pipes, lumber and other materials from the inauguration stage to attack law enforcement and halt the certification of the election. But memories of that day, and heightened worries about violence in this year's tense election season after the latest apparent assassination attempt against Trump, shadowed the event. "These workers will literally set

the stage for the peaceful transfer of power," said Sen. Amy Klobuchar, the Minnesota Democrat who chairs the joint committee overseeing preparations for the inauguration.

Preparations for the last inauguration became an integral part of the violence that unfolded at the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, with rioters swarming the stage and the tall press platform that stands in front of it during their siege of the building. □

U.S. wants more clarity from Ukraine on possible use of long-range weapons

By LOLITA C. BALDOR and
AAMER MADHANI

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration still is not convinced that it should give Ukraine the authority to launch long-range missiles deeper into Russia, and U.S. officials say they are seeking more detailed information about how Kyiv would use the weapons and how they fit into the broader strategy for the war.

U.S. officials said they have asked Ukraine to spell out more clearly its combat objectives, as President Joe Biden prepares to meet with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy next week.

Administration officials are concerned that loosening restrictions on the use of the weapons would have limited impact and come with great risk. Russian President Vladimir Putin last week warned that Russia would be "at war" with the United States and its NATO allies if they allow Ukraine to use the long-range weapons.

U.S. defense officials have repeatedly argued that the long-range missiles are limited in number and that Ukraine already is using its own long-range drones to hit targets farther into Russia. That capability was



Joint Chiefs of Staff Air Force of the U.S. Gen. CQ Brown, from left, U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Ukraine's Defense Minister Rostem Umerov attend a meeting at Ramstein Air Base in Ramstein-Miesenbach, Germany, Friday, Sept. 6, 2024.

Associated Press

evidenced by a Ukrainian drone strike overnight that hit a large military depot, causing a huge blaze, in a town 500 kilometers (300 miles) from the border. Ukrainian leaders, however, say they need permission to strike weapons depots, airfields and military bases far from the border to motivate Russia to seek peace. The U.S. allows Ukraine to use American-provided weapons in more limited, cross-border strikes to counter attacks by Rus-

sian forces. The U.S. is coming under mounting pressure from NATO allies who believe Ukraine should be the one to decide how and where it uses the weapons and how it fights its own war. A senior U.S. official said the subject came up during meetings of NATO defense chiefs in Europe over the weekend attended by Gen. CQ Brown, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff and that most advocated in favor of the change.

The U.S. officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations.

Ukraine is pressing to use U.S.-supplied Army Tactical Missile Systems, or ATAC-MS, and British-supplied Storm Shadow missiles to hit deeper into Russia. Biden discussed the issue during a meeting last week with British Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

U.S. officials familiar with discussions said they believed Starmer was seek-

ing Biden's approval to allow Ukraine to use the Storm Shadow missiles for expanded strikes in Russia. Biden's approval may be needed because Storm Shadow components are made in the U.S. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to share the status of private conversations.

Starmer said talks would continue when global leaders convene for the U.N. General Assembly gathering next week. Biden's meeting with Zelenskyy is expected to happen late next week after the U.S. president returns from the U.N.

A senior U.S. official said the U.S. wants to help Ukraine shape its combat objectives for the war and the use of long-range weapons.

On Saturday, the head of NATO's military committee said Ukraine has the solid legal and military right to strike deep inside Russia to gain combat advantage. Speaking in Prague at the close of the meeting of the alliance's military chiefs, Adm. Rob Bauer of the Netherlands said, "Every nation that is attacked has the right to defend itself. And that right doesn't stop at the border of your own nation." □

FBI disrupts Chinese cyber operation targeting critical infrastructure in the U.S.

By ERIC TUCKER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The FBI has disrupted a group of Chinese hackers who were working at the direction of the Chinese government to infiltrate critical infrastructure in the U.S. and other countries and to spy on and steal data from universities, government agencies and others, Director Chris Wray said Wednesday.

The hacking campaign known as Flax Typhoon installed malicious software on thousands of internet-connected devices, including cameras, video recorders, and home and office routers, to create a massive botnet — a network of infected computers. "Flax Typhoon's actions caused real harm to its victims, who had to devote precious time to clean up the mess when they discovered the malware," Wray said

at the Aspen Cyber Summit.

The FBI and Justice Department, which obtained a warrant to seize the botnet's infrastructure, did not identify any of the targets by name but said they included universities, government agencies, telecommunications providers, media organizations and nongovernmental organizations. Half of the hijacked devices were located in the U.S., Wray said. "This was another successful disruption, but make no mistake it's just one round in a much longer fight," Wray said. "The Chinese government is going to continue to target your organizations and our critical infrastructure, either by their own hand or concealed through their proxies, and we'll continue to work with our partners to identify their malicious activity, disrupt their hacking campaigns, and bring them to light." □



Attorney General Merrick Garland, center, speaks before a meeting of the Justice Department's Election Threats Task Force, at the Department of Justice, Wednesday, Sept. 4, 2024, in Washington, with from left, Deputy Attorney General, Criminal Division, Nicole Argentieri, Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco, Garland, FBI Director Christopher Wray and Assistant Attorney General, National Security Division, Matthew Olsen.

Associated Press

Teamsters union declines to endorse Trump or Harris for president

By JOSH BOAK and TOM KRISHER

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The International Brotherhood of Teamsters declined Wednesday to endorse Kamala Harris or Donald Trump for president, saying neither candidate had sufficient support from the 1.3 million-member union.

"Unfortunately, neither major candidate was able to make serious commitments to our union to ensure the interests of working people are always put before Big Business," Teamsters President Sean M. O'Brien said in a statement. "We sought commitments from both Trump and Harris not to interfere in critical union campaigns or core Teamsters industries and to honor our members' right to strike but were unable to secure those pledges."

The Teamsters' rebuff reflected a labor union torn over issues of political identity and policy, one that mirrors a broader national divide. Vice President Harris has unmistakably backed organized labor, while former President Trump has appealed to many white blue-collar workers even as he has openly scorned unions at times. By not endorsing



Sean O'Brien, president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, speaks during the Republican National Convention, July 15, 2024, in Milwaukee.

Associated Press

anyone, the Teamsters are essentially ceding some of their influence in November's election as both candidates claimed to have support from its members. Harris campaign spokesperson Lauren Hitt noted in an emailed statement that more than three dozen retired Teamsters spoke last month in Chicago at the Democratic National Convention, having endorsed Harris. Their pensions were saved through the 2021 passage of the Butch Lewis Act

that President Joe Biden and Harris championed. "While Donald Trump says striking workers should be fired, Vice President Harris has literally walked the picket line and stood strong with organized labor for her entire career," Hitt said. "The Vice President's strong union record is why Teamsters locals across the country have already endorsed her alongside the overwhelming majority of organized labor." The Teamsters said Wednesday that internal polling of

its members showed Trump with an advantage over Harris, a fact that the Republican's campaign immediately seized upon by sending out an email that said the "rank-and-file of the Teamsters Union supports Donald Trump for President." Harris met Monday with a panel of Teamsters, having long courted organized labor and made support for the middle class her central policy goal. Trump also met with a panel of Teamsters in January and even

invited O'Brien to speak at the Republican National Convention, where the union leader railed against corporate greed. The Teamsters' choice to not endorse came just weeks ahead of the Nov. 5 election, far later than endorsements by other large unions such as the AFL-CIO, the American Federation of Teachers and the United Auto Workers that have chosen to devote resources to getting out the vote for Harris.

With O'Brien facing a backlash from some Teamsters' members after speaking at the Republican National Convention, it's no surprise that the union decided not to make an endorsement, said Art Wheaton, director of labor studies at Cornell University.

Trump's praise of Tesla CEO Elon Musk for firing workers who supposedly went on strike really made a Trump endorsement very unlikely, Wheaton said. "The members were not in total agreement," he said.

Marick Masters, a business professor emeritus at Wayne State University in Detroit who follows labor issues, said the Teamsters lack of an endorsement suggests a realignment within the union's membership. □

The Smoky Mountains' highest peak is reverting to the Cherokee name Kuwohi

GATLINBURG, Tenn. (AP) — The highest peak at Great Smoky Mountains National

Park is officially reverting to its Cherokee name more than 150 years after a sur-

veyor named it for a Confederate general.

The U.S. Board of Geographic Names voted on Wednesday in favor of a request from the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians to officially change the name Clingmans Dome to Kuwohi, according to a news release from the park. The Cherokee name for the mountain translates to "mulberry place."

"The Great Smoky National Park team was proud to support this effort to officially restore the mountain and to recognize its importance to the Cherokee People," Superintendent Cassius Cash said in the release. "The Cherokee People have had strong connec-

tions to Kuwohi and the surrounding area, long before the land became a national park. The National Park Service looks forward to continuing to work with the Cherokee People to share their story and preserve this landscape together."

Kuwohi is a sacred place for the Cherokee people and is the highest point within the traditional Cherokee homeland, according to the park. The peak is visible from the Qualla Boundary, home of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. Great Smoky Mountains National Park closes Kuwohi every year for three half-days so that predominantly Cherokee schools can visit the mountain and learn its his-

tory. Great Smoky Mountains National Park, on the Tennessee-North Carolina border, is America's most visited national park, and Kuwohi is one of its most popular sites, with more than 650,000 visitors per year. The peak became known as Clingmans Dome following an 1859 survey by geographer Arnold Guyot, who named it for Thomas Lanier Clingman, a Confederate Brigadier General as well as a lawyer, U.S. Representative and Senator from North Carolina, according to the park.

The name-restoration proposal was submitted in January by Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Principal Chief Michell Hicks. □



Members of the media walk down from Clingman's Dome tower while waiting for a total solar eclipse to begin in Great Smoky Mountains National Park at Clingman's Dome, Aug. 21, 2017.

Associated Press

Dutch government led by hard right asks for formal opt-out from EU migration rules

By MOLLY QUELL and RAF CASERT
Associated Press

THE HAGUE (AP) — The new Dutch government dominated by the far-right party of Geert Wilders officially asked the European Union for an exemption from its migration obligations on Wednesday, setting up a confrontation over one of the most explosive issues facing the bloc at a time when support for anti-immigration parties in Europe is rising.

Dutch Migration Minister Marjolein Faber of Wilders' party wrote to the European Commission that the Netherlands wants out of regulations for accepting refugees, claiming that otherwise one of the wealthiest countries in the world would struggle to provide public services.

"I have just informed the EU Commission that I want a migration opt-out within Europe for the Netherlands. We need to be in charge of our own asylum policy again!" Faber said. Faber was seeking to fulfill a campaign promise to quickly and drastically reduce the number of immigrants in the nation.

During Wednesday's debate in parliament, Wilders called the move a "a sort



Dutch Prime Minister Dick Schoof, right, sits next to Health Minister Fleur Agema, center, and Climate and Green Growth Minister Sophie Hermans, left, as he listens to Dutch King Willem-Alexander outlining the new government's policy plans and budget for the coming year in The Hague, Netherlands, Tuesday, Sept. 17, 2024.

Associated Press

of mini-Nexit," a play on "Netherlands" and "exit," and much like Brexit. He has repeatedly called for the country to depart the European Union during his three-decade long career but the move is not currently part of any government plans.

In a letter to Ylva Johansson, the European Commissioner for Home Affairs, Faber insisted that the gov-

ernment needed to "drastically reduce the volume of migration to the Netherlands, in order to continue to fulfil our constitutional duties providing for public housing, healthcare and education." On Tuesday, the government, which came to power in July, announced its policy blueprint for the coming year, including stricter policies to hold back or kick out

migrants who don't qualify for asylum.

It echoes campaign themes from across much of the EU where populist and far-right parties have surged, profiting from a wave of popular discontent with promises of tackling the migration issue first and foremost.

Even though Faber's party rode to an election victory last November on the prom-

ise of swift, forceful action on immigration, the letter itself was much more cautious. It said the Netherlands would call for an opt-out from the rules "in case of (EU) treaty amendment," a prospect which is many years off, at best.

"An opt-out is only possible in view of the treaty changes. Important: this is a legal requirement. Also in this context, we do not expect any immediate changes," said EU spokeswoman Anita Hippner, adding that until then, migration rules remain "binding on the Netherlands."

The last treaty change dates from 2008 and there are no current plans to negotiate a new one. Should there be an appetite for a new treaty, all 27 member states would have to agree to give the Netherlands special dispensation.

New figures released this week by the EU's asylum agency show 17,376 people applied for international protection in the Netherlands, a nation of 17.7 million, in the first six months of this year, a fairly consistent number. That amounts to around 3% of all applications lodged in Europe. Most of them were Syrians, Iraqis or from Turkey. □

Colombia's president says attack on army base 'practically ends' peace talks with ELN rebels

By MANUEL RUEDA
Associated Press

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP) — An attack on a military base in eastern Colombia killed two soldiers and injured at least 21, Colombia's military said on Tuesday, as tensions escalate between Colombia's government and one of the nation's largest remaining rebel groups. Colombia's military blamed the National Liberation Army for the attack, with President Gustavo Petro hinting late on Tuesday that the attack will lead to a suspension or a cancellation of peace talks with the rebel group. "This is an attack that practically closes a peace pro-

cess, with blood," Petro said during a ceremony, in which he named a new judge to one of Colombia's highest courts.

The National Liberation Army, or ELN, ended a cease-fire with the Colombian government in August, but is still involved in peace talks aimed at ending more than five decades of conflict. The army said Tuesday that the group fired homemade rockets from a cargo truck that had been parked near a base in Puerto Jordán, a small town in Colombia's Arauca province. The ELN was founded in the early 1960s by union leaders and university students inspired by the Cuban Rev-

olution. The group has an estimated 6,000 fighters in Colombia and Venezuela and finances itself through drug trafficking and illegal gold mines.

Recently the ELN has been spreading into rural areas abandoned by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, the large rebel group that made a peace deal with Colombia's government in 2016.

After being elected two years ago, President Gustavo Petro quickly launched peace talks with the ELN and several smaller armed groups under a policy known as total peace. But talks with ELN floundered as the group con-

tinued to conduct kidnappings and tax civilians in areas under its control. The ELN has also expressed its frustration with a recent

effort by Colombia's government to start separate peace negotiations with one of its splinter groups in southwest Colombia. □



Colombian President Gustavo Petro speaks after signing a law banning bullfighting, in La Plaza Santa Maria, Bogota, Colombia, on July 22, 2024.

Associated Press

Blinken says surprise escalations threaten to derail talks for a cease-fire in Gaza

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER

Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken expressed frustration Wednesday at surprise escalations that threaten to derail efforts to broker a cease-fire deal in Gaza, noting that the United States is assessing a deadly attack that caused pagers used by Hezbollah to explode in Lebanon.

Blinken spoke to reporters in Cairo, where he traveled for talks on the cease-fire negotiations and U.S.-Egyptian relations. While Israel has not publicly spoken on responsibility in the pager attack, a U.S. official has said Israel briefed the United States after the explosions. The United States, Egypt and other international partners are working for an agreement between Israel and Hamas to halt nearly a year of war in Gaza and release hostages held by the militant group. The U.S. says such a deal is the best chance at tamping down wider regional tensions, with Israeli leaders threatening to step up military action against Iranian-



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken attends a joint press conference with Egypt's Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty in Tahrir Palace in Cairo, Egypt Wednesday, Sept. 18, 2024.

Associated Press

backed Hezbollah militants in Lebanon and the pager attack risking further escalation. "Time and again" when the U.S. and other mediators believe they are making progress on a cease-fire deal in Gaza, "we've seen an event that ... threatens to slow it, stop it, derail it," Blinken said in response to a question

about the previous day's explosions in Lebanon. Personal pagers used by Hezbollah in Lebanon exploded nearly simultaneously Tuesday, killing at least 12 people, including two children. Blinken reiterated that the U.S. was still gathering information on the circumstances of the pager at-

tack and declined to make more specific comments. In other unexpected events that have put a cease-fire deal at risk, Blinken spoke of the discovery this month of the bodies of six hostages who Israel said had been recently killed by Hamas. They were among those still held in Gaza following Hamas' Oct. 7 attacks in Is-

rael that launched the war. When news came of their deaths, negotiators had been making progress on the timing and other details of a swap that would have freed hostages in exchange for the release of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli detention, America's top diplomat said.

Blinken, who had meetings with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi and Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty, said the most dire need in the troubled cease-fire negotiations was for both sides to show they actually wanted a deal.

"The most important thing in this moment is to see a demonstration of political will," Blinken said.

He headed to his 10th trip to the Middle East since the war in Gaza began without the optimistic projections that the Biden administration has previously conveyed of a breakthrough in the negotiations.

The U.S., Egypt and other allies say a deal is essential to quelling escalated attacks by Iranian-backed groups in Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq and Syria. □

Zimbabwe and Namibia will kill scores of elephants to feed people facing drought

By FARAI MUTSAKA and MOGOMOTSI MAGOME

Associated Press

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP)

— Zimbabwe and Namibia have announced plans to slaughter hundreds of wild elephants and other animals to feed hunger-stricken residents amid severe drought conditions in the southern African countries. Zimbabwe said Monday it would allow the killing of 200 elephants so that their meat can be distributed among needy communities, while in Namibia the killing of more than 700 wild animals including 83 elephants is under way as part of a plan announced three weeks ago.

Tinashe Farawo, a spokesman for the Zimbabwe National Parks and Wildlife

Management Authority, said permits would be issued in needy communities to hunt elephants and that the agency also would kill some of the overall allotment of 200 animals.

"We will start culling as soon as we have finished issuing out permits," Farawo said. The elephants will be taken from an area where the population has become unsustainable, Farawo said.



A herd of elephants make their way through the Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe, in search of water, on Nov. 10, 2019.

Associated Press

The hunting will take place in areas such as Hwange National Park in the country's arid west where there has been increasing competition between humans and wildlife for food and water as rising temperatures make the resources more scarce.

Hwange has more than 45,000 elephants, but now has the capacity to sustain only 15,000, Farawo said. The country's overall population of about 100,000 elephants is double what the country's national parks can sustain, park officials say.

The El Nino weather phenomenon has worsened the situation, with the parks agency in December saying that more than 100 elephants died due

to drought. More animals could die of thirst and hunger in the coming weeks as the country enters the hottest period of the year, Farawo said.

Zimbabwe's Environment Minister Sithembiso Nyoni told Parliament last week that she had given the go-ahead for the culling program.

"Indeed Zimbabwe has more elephants than we need, more elephants than our forestry can accommodate," Nyoni said.

She said the government was preparing "to do like what Namibia has done so that we can cull the elephants and mobilize the women to dry the meat, package it and ensure that it gets to some communities that need the protein." □

Aruba Astro Research Int. shares images of the partial lunar eclipse

The partial lunar eclipse of Tuesday, September 17th, was broadcasted around the world, including on Aruba. The Aruba Astro Research Int. is dedicated to providing astronomical news to the Aruban community, and this week, they provided images of the partial lunar eclipse.

The image illustrates the moment that the partial eclipse started and then slowly darkened the moon. These images were taken exclusively by Mr. Marcos Bislip of the Aruba Astro Research Int. at Congoweg, San Nicolas.

Mr. Bislip took the images, did some filming and even transmitted a live event through radio for the first time during the late hours of the night on the TOP FM 95.1 channel. This was considered a huge success for the astronomy organization, marking September 17th a historical day for astronomic phenomenon's. □



Photo by Marcos Bislip on the Aruba Astro Research



Int. Facebook page.

Aruban legends: Frenchman's Pass

(Oranjestad)—If you ever plan on taking a group tour of the island, you may pass through the Frenchman's Pass in Balashi. The Frenchman's pass (known to locals as "Franse Pas") remains a mysterious—and spooky—road of which its legend is told from generation to generation.

The history of the Frenchman's pass—and how it got its name—dates back to the colonization era, when the French tried to colonize the island, but were met with an angry mob of indigenous settlers, refusing to give up their land. However, as the French were heavily equipped with fire arms, the indigenous settlers began to retreat, and hid away in nearby caves. The French colonizers tried to smoke them out of the caves, but the indigenous settlers ended up inhaling too much smoke and most died in those caves. From then on, this passage was known as Frenchman's Pass, and there have been many accounts of spirits roaming the area of Spanish Lagoon.

There are many ghost stories surrounding this area, but one of the most famous one involves a lonely hitchhiker, trying to find a ride back home in the dark rainy night. Arriving at a nearby bar,



Sometime after trying to hitchhike, the man saw a car approaching, appearing almost ghost-like in the rain. However, since he needed a ride real bad, he didn't think twice and jumped in. But to his horror, he noticed that there was no driver in the front. Paralyzed with fear, he didn't dare to get out, and the car started to move.

When approaching a sharp turn, the hitchhiker braced for impact, but just when he thought the car might drive straight off the road and crash, he saw a hand appear out the window and turn the wheel. For the next few turns, the hand appeared again. After having had enough, the man decided to jump out and he ran to Santa Cruz.

he ordered a drink and began to tell everyone about his experience. Everyone grew quiet, because they realized he wasn't some drunk messing around; he was telling the truth. Sometime later, two men walked into the bar and one of them noticed the hitchhiker. He called out to his buddy and said: "Look, there's the idiot who sat in our car when we were pushing it!"

French man's pass is one of the few sites on the island that keeps the locals on their toes. While most ghost stories may not have real grounds—or some may even be a set up story for a joke, this pass contributes a lot to our culture of folkloric story-telling. □

Source: visitaruba.com

Aruba Conservation Foundation to host information night about the 'Lora'

Get your update on the reintroduction of Aruba's most beautiful bird

The Lora has been extinct in the wild of Aruba for over 70 years and thanks to the many dedicated and passionate rangers, local, regional, and international partners, the Lora took their first flight earlier this year.

The Aruba Conservation Foundation (ACF) is hosting an informative evening as they share more information about the bird's

survival, behavior, adaptation, diet and so much more. Join them next week Wednesday, September 25th, at the Aruba Experience Café in the city center from 7PM to 8PM. Participation is completely free, but registration is needed to confirm participation. □

Register today: <https://forms.office.com/r/Y7kbX-WGn7G>





Papillon: Where Culinary Tradition Sparks with Timeless Elegance



Tucked away in the vibrant heart of the Village for over a decade and a half, Papillon isn't just a restaurant; it's a culinary adventure waiting to unfold. Picture this: a sanctuary where the flavors of the French Caribbean have danced harmoniously with classic French fare for the past 15 years, all set against the backdrop of a movie-inspired ambiance that's as enchanting as it is welcoming.

Located in the heart of Palm Beach and within walking distance from hotels and local markets in the area, Papillon takes the famous story of a French man experiencing the flavors and culture of the Caribbean and incorporates these aspects of the Caribbean touch into their French culinary repertoire. Step through the doors of the newly-expanded Papillon, and you're not just stepping into a dining establishment; you're stepping into a world where sophistication embraces you like an old friend. The decor, a homage to the allure of the iconic film, casts a spell of intimacy and comfort, urging you to settle in and relish every moment. Here, dining isn't just about sustenance; it's about indulging in an experience meticulously crafted to ignite your senses.

At the heart of Papillon's magic lies its menu – a symphony of flavors orchestrated by culinary artisans. Imagine savoring the decadent richness of foie gras or the sublime delicacy of frog legs, each dish a love letter to tradition infused with a dash of innovation. And oh, the spectacle of the Dover sole being expertly prepared table-side! It's culinary theater at its finest, leaving you spellbound with every bite. All this served with a backdrop of the Caribbean ambience, complete with live musical performances and an inviting and colorful twist to your dinner experience!

But wait, there's more! Enter the realm of the Chef's Table, a weekly extravaganza led by the maestro himself, Executive Chef Juan Ludeña. Prepare to be whisked away on a six-course odyssey, each dish meticulously paired with wines handpicked from the largest French wine selection on the island by the esteemed Maitre d' Michael Otten. It's a soirée reserved for those who truly appreciate the artistry of gastronomy – an exquisite symphony for the palate.



In essence, Papillon isn't just a restaurant; it's an oasis for epicurean explorers. It's where passion meets refinement, where every dish is a masterpiece waiting to be savored, and every moment is a celebration of the finer things in life. So if you're craving the warmth of French Caribbean delights, Papillon invites you to join them on an unforgettable journey for the senses. Bon appétit!

Papillon is located in Palm Beach in front of the Hilton Resort, and open from 5pm to 10pm. Early Bird takes places from 5pm to 7pm. For reservations or more information please contact the restaurant at +297 699 5400, e-mail them at info@papillonaruba.com or visit their website at papillonaruba.com □



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Chef Urvin Croes Invited to Participate in "BogotaEats"



Aruba's culinary scene is evolving, thanks to the visionary talent of Chef Urvin Croes, the mastermind behind Infini Aruba, the island's most innovative fine dining experience. In less than four years, Chef Urvin and his team have redefined fine dining in Aruba, offering an 8-course menu that changes every three months. This commitment to creativity and excellence has garnered significant international recognition.

Infini Aruba is more than just a restaurant; it is a creative canvas where Chef Urvin and his team craft gastronomic masterpieces that rival those of the world's culinary capitals. Their dedication has drawn attention from prestigious culinary events across the globe, including an invitation to showcase their skills at 'BogotaEats,' one of South America's most prominent culinary festivals.

Additionally, Chef Urvin has been invited to the Dominican Republic to collaborate with Chef Jason Howard, a former MasterChef winner, in promoting high-level Caribbean cuisine. This international acclaim

underscores the impact Chef Urvin is making both locally and abroad. The Aruba Tourism Authority (ATA) has played a crucial role in supporting these opportunities, recognizing the value of showcasing Aruba's culinary excellence on an international stage.

Beyond Infini, Chef Urvin is also the creative force behind Po-Ke Ono, consistently ranked among the top 10 restaurants on the island. Po-Ke Ono exemplifies his ability to blend innovation with accessibility, offering extraordinary dining experiences to a wider audience. For those seeking the pinnacle of Aruba's culinary offerings, Infini is the place where local talent meets international standards. Don't miss the opportunity to experience Infini's 11th menu, available until November 15, 2024. Make your reservation now and indulge in a world-class dining experience at Aruba's most exclusive venue.□



Aruba to me

Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use

said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from William and Chrissy Scibelli, Longmeadow, Massachusetts, USA.

They wrote to us saying: "This is our 7th

year here in Aruba. Over the years we have met great friends, seen beautiful parts of the island and have eaten some of the best food ever. Even though we love the weather, ocean and restaurants, what we love the most are the people of Aruba! Everyone we meet on this island is so kind, generous and helpful. We will be back every year..."

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers!□

ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our

Visit the island's hidden natural pools

(Oranjestad)—Amongst the countless beaches surrounding the island that are well-known and frequently visited, there are an additional two "hidden" natural pools that are situated in the northern coast of the island, two ideal stops in your tour itinerary.

Conchi (Natural Pool)

For many years, Conchi was the only natural pool that we had on the island. Located in the Arikok National Park, near Boca Keto and the Daimari Ranch, Conchi—also known "Cura-

di Turtuga (Turtle's Cove) or just Natural Pool—is reachable with any 4x4 vehicle or by foot if you're up for a long hike. However, since it is part of the National Park, you must first get permission from park management to enter. You would have to purchase a day pass, and receive a wristband as proof of payment. Once you've completed that, you are set!

If you decide to hike from the entrance of the Arikok National Park, this is also possible: do bring plenty

of protective clothing and enough water and food—it could take you up to three hours to hike there!

However, when you eventually do get there, you will be greeted with crystal blue water surrounded by a natural rock formation that protects you from the wild waves on the other side. Though the pool is located on the northern side of the island (where the sea is largely rough and largely no suitable for swimming), the pool itself is very calm. It's also relatively deep, and you can climb up the rocks and jump in!

Cave Pool

This relatively new pool appeared just a few years ago, when a part of the dried up coral floor broke off and created a partition between the ocean and what is now the natural pool that is hidden there. Because it's still so new, there is no official name for it, but most people just call



it the cave pool.

Just like the Conchi, the new natural pool is situated on the northern coast of Aruba. However, this pool is much easier to reach with any type of vehicle, and there is no hiking needed. This spot has also become a regular stop for touring visitors.

When you get there, maybe you won't be able to spot the pool immediately, because you will probably notice the moon-shaped lagoon where wild northern waves crash into each oth-

er. Sounds scary, but if you look down on your right, you'll see a calm, crystal blue little pool in the corner. To get there, you have to climb down some stairs. Be careful when climbing down and follow the instructions of your tour guide if you have one.

And just like Conchi, this pool also has a jumping spot, and a rope to climb back up the boulder. □

Picture of cave pool is credited to RockaBeach Tours



Another Treasure of Aruba's Beaches: Sea Glass!



Bridge" and the huge red anchor close to "Grapefield" beach you will be able to find your own pieces of sea glass. The sea glass that was created is the product of a very long and interesting process. It can take anywhere from 10 to 30 years to make sea glass. The name for any piece of glass that finds its way to the ocean and tumbles around in the water long enough is "Sea glass.

The colorful pieces of glass are being used for decoration, handcrafts and jewelry! Once glass makes its way into the ocean, the glass is broken up into shards and is tumbled around in the water, where sand and other rocks act like sandpaper to smooth out its rough edges. Sometimes as the sea glass is passed through fire, it becomes fire glass, the rarest of sea glass with certain inclusions, just like precious gems.

For years, the water beat against the different kinds of trash being dumped. Glass, household appliances and even motor parts were discarded on the beach. The waves and weather conditions wore down the overwhelming amount of garbage in the wa-



ter, creating millions of beautiful smooth rocks.

It's hard to believe the short-sighted mistakes we were making that could have potentially ruined these beautiful beaches. But thanks to natural processes, the ocean transformed the trash into the sea glass. Each colored gem on the beach has its own story.

The ruby red glass stones are typically from old car tail-lights.



Then, the sapphire rocks are the remnants of broken apothecary bottles. The most common and the easiest to find are the brown (Amstel & Polar beer), green (Heineken & Balashi beer) and clear glass which are the soft much loved "soft drink" bottles.

If you like to see the sea glass for yourself, and be in awe of the power of nature, rent a car or jeep and go explore our deserted beaches on the north side of the island. Make it a fun family day! Even if we didn't mean to pollute the Beaches how we did, it is inspiring to see just how the earth can correct our mistakes.

Funny, how trash can change into treasures!

Everybody knows that you are not allowed to take local shells home, but the people working at the airport have no problem you taking sea glass home. A few of those pieces make great souvenirs. You can place them in a wine glass or large bottle for decoration and every time you look at it a smile will light up your face thinking back of your unforgettable Aruba vacation! □

NOORD - It is hard to imagine this happening today, but years ago people dumped all kinds of refuse straight into the ocean, including old cars, and their household garbage, which of course included lots of glass. Over the next 30 years the pounding waves cleaned the beach, by breaking down everything but glass and pottery. The pounding waves washed the trash up and down, back and forth. Tons of polished, broken glass pieces were created by the pounding surf. These smoothed, colored glass particles then settled along the sea shore in millions, and that is why you can find these beautiful and colorful pieces on the north shore beaches of Aruba.

Especially on the strip on white sand between the famous Natural

The Aruban Cunukero

From past to present

(Oranjestad)—Aruba's culture consists of rich historical traditions that make up the Aruban identity and lifestyle. However, the life of the cunukero (farmer) is perhaps the most important aspect of our culture, in a sense representing to locals the true essence of the Aruban.

Historically, cunucus (farms) played a huge role in the early social and economic development of Aruba, and its relevance dates back to the early days of the colonization era. Upon being discovered by Spanish conquistadors in the late 15th century, Aruba was used primarily as a ranch, housing horses and cattle brought from Europe. During the Dutch colonization era where the West Indian Company (WIC) dominated the economic sphere on the island, using the land to set up cattle farms and ranches remained popular.

Anthropologist Sidney Mintz divided Caribbean farmers back in four categories:

1. The "squatters", who were mostly comprised of illegal and poor colonists, runaway slaves and deserters who took advantage of the Spanish's weak supervision on Caribbean islands like Cuba and the DR;
2. Then you have "Early Yeomen", who were legal farmers who came to the west under contract. Once their contract expired, they were given a plot of land for independent use;
3. Proto-Peasants were plantation slaves who were allowed to have a small piece of land to grow food for their own consumption. This was to curb the cost of living on the plantations;
4. Lastly you have the "Runaway Peasants", usually comprised of runaway slaves who acquired farming tools and cattle through stealing or through secret exchanges with other slaves from different plantations.

However, the Aruban cunukeros back then are hard to place, and their history may explain why.

From 1636 (beginning of Dutch colonization era) to before the oil industry in 1924, Aruba's population consisted of mostly farmers. These farmers were mostly indigenous and were characterized as peasants. They weren't allowed to participate in trading, but instead were granted a piece of land to live off of. However, in exchange for this grant, these indigenous farmers were obligated to work for the WIC, doing daily tasks such as taking care of or hunting cattle—large majority of which were destined for Curacao, clean water tanks and chop wood, among other things.

As much as these farmers were given to opportunity to live "free" with a plot of land, their exclusion from the trading and business world, as well as being deprived the chance to become real property and cattle owners, made them a unique group among Caribbean farmers at the time.

The WIC placed a lot of restrictions on these indigenous farmers—a method to safeguard their cattle deposit on the island. The indigenous farmers were mostly granted less than 7 acres of land. Those who owned bigger land were ei-



ther once affiliated with the WIC or were colonists who settled on the island to try their luck at farming. In 1767, there were about 120 houses/cunucus on the island.

These Aruban farmers were also limited to the amount of cattle they could keep. Most kept goats as cattle, as only those who were affiliated with the WIC could keep (more) sheep. Of the 76 goat herders on the island, about 45 of them had less than 30 goats, and only 7 of them had more than 60 goats.

It wasn't until the WIC was defunct in late 18th century that these farmers were able to obtain more freedom as cunukeros. After 1824, the government gave these farmers official permission to keep livestock, and the obligations once placed on them were officially discarded.

Because of the dry climate in Aruba, growing food for commercial purposes was not popular. The focus was mainly on cattle herding and taking care of livestock. However, livestock need food to survive, and when Aruba experienced its drier dry climate, many farmers would see a big loss in their livestock, and hence profit.

Although the WIC at one point did try to come up with an initiative to

get more people to have land on the island, the climate never really allowed real profit from farming. Because of the climate, Aruban farmers in general could not keep large quantities of livestock. At a certain point toward the end of the 18th century, the climate got so bad that many farmers decided to leave the island for a while.

For this reason, the farming economy on the island remained small. As the years went by and people noticed that these farms could not really produce any sustainable profit, farmers kept their small piece of land just to live off of. This is why the Aruban cunukeros only played a very tiny role into the plantation economy.

In modern Aruba, cunucus and cunukeros still exist on the island, fortunately with more freedom and more opportunity to tap into the agricultural market. These farmers usually sell their produce on a smaller scale, like during farmers' market events and other types of (holiday) events.

Source: "Arubaans Akkoord: Opstellen over Aruba van voor de komst van de olieindustrie (Aruban Accord: Essays on Aruba Before the Arrival of the Oil Industry)" by Alofs, Luc; Rutgers, Wim; Coomans, Henny E. red. □



(Oranjestad)—If you're ever up for an Aruban snack, try making another Aruban classic appetizer called Pan Bati. Similar to a pancake both in appearance and cooking, this is a su-

Dining in? Try making a local favorite

How to make "pan bati"

per easy meal that adults and children will both enjoy. Here's how to make it!

Ingredients:

2 cups of all purpose flour
1 cup grams of fine cornmeal (we recommend the Harina PAN brand)
2 tbsp baking powder
1 1/3 cup of milk
1 pinch of salt
2 tbsp of granulated sugar
Oil for cooking

Instructions:

Add all the dry ingredients in a bowl first, and

stir until well mixed. Then add the milk and beat until reached a pancake-like consistency. If more moisture is needed, add some water until reached desired consistency.

In a hot pan with oil, pour in enough batter to cover the bottom of the pan. Just like pancakes, flip the pan bati when one side turns golden brown. When your pan bati is ready, place on a plate and cover with a clean kitchen towel.

Traditionally, pan bati is cut in triangle pieces, and is often eaten as a side dish with soup, fried fish or stews. However, it is also casually enjoyed with some butter and cheese on top! □

CROSSWORD

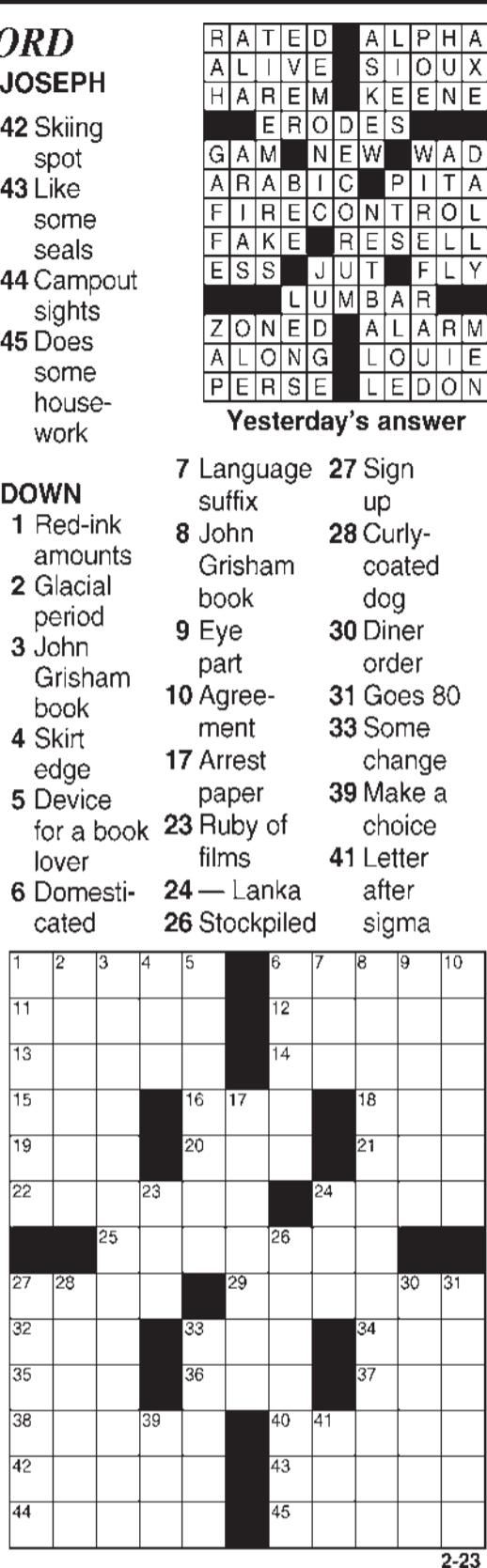
By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

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- 14 Track events
- 15 Pouchlike part
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- 35 — Alamos
- 36 "— not for me to say"
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- 40 Boosted

DOWN

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- 4 Skirt edge
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- 6 Domesticated
- 7 Language suffix
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2-23

A X Y D L B A A X R
is L O N G F E L L O W

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

2-23

CRYPTOQUOTE

K G X ' D K D X K R A D C D Q K X H
D Q Y D D C T C S S C B K G Y X A B
U Y Z B K D Q X C T K G D Y H A G K X
K D Z A D ? — E V R Z T Y V U
T C X D F C T A S Z

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: SOONER OR LATER, IF MAN IS EVER TO BE WORTHY OF HIS DESTINY, WE MUST FILL OUR HEARTS WITH TOLERANCE. — STAN LEE

Cruise ship Schedule: September 03 - 24 2024

TUE	03	ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS CARNIVAL HORIZON	08.00 09.00	20.00 22.00	B C	1 1
WED	04	RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	09.00	21.00	C	1
TUE	10	CELEBRITY BEYOND CARNIVAL CELEBRATION CARNIVAL VISTA	08.00 08.00 13.00	21.00 22.00 23.00	B C I	1 1 1
TUE	17	CARNIVAL HORIZON	08.00	22.00	C	1
TUE	24	CELEBRITY BEYOND CARNIVAL MAGIC	08.00 09.00	21.00 22.00	B C	1 1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

Supermarket hours



(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic but important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

lets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Electrical power



Drinking water



Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets:

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Safety



Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

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EU warns deadly flooding and wildfires show climate breakdown is fast becoming the norm

By RAF CASERT

Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — Devastating floods through much of Central Europe and deadly wildfires in Portugal are joint proof of a "climate breakdown" that will become the norm unless drastic action is taken, the European Union's head office said Wednesday.

"Make no mistake. This tragedy is not an anomaly. This is fast becoming the norm for our shared future," said EU Crisis Management Commissioner Janez Lenarcic.

The worst flooding in years moved Tuesday across a broad swath of Central Europe, taking lives and destroying homes. At the other end of the 27-nation EU, raging fires through northern Portugal have killed at least six people.

"Europe is the fastest warming continent globally and is particularly vulnerable to extreme weather events like the one we are discussing today. We could not return to a safer past," Lenarcic told EU lawmakers in Strasbourg, France. He warned that beyond the human cost, nations are also struggling to cope with mounting bills for repairing the damage from emergencies and the



An aerial picture taken with a drone shows the flooded resort village of Venek and the swollen Danube River near Györ, Hungary, Tuesday, September 17, 2024.

Associated Press

lengthy recovery from disaster.

"The average cost of disasters in the 1980s was 8 billion euros per year. More recently in 2021 and in 2022, the damage is surpassed 50 billion euros per year, meaning the cost of inaction is far greater than the cost of action," he said. Terry Reintke, president of the Greens group in the European Parliament, said the cost for the EU since the 1980s was estimated at 650 billion euros.

The EU is struggling to move quickly with measures to counter climate change and has run into political opposition in many mem-

ber states, where the political climate is turning against environmental issues and measures ranging from home heating to farm pollution. □

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San Lucas:Tel. 584 5119

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Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002
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Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
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Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

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Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
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A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

TRAVEL INFO

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American Airlines	582 2700
Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

AID FOUNDATIONS

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FAVI- Visually Impaired	
Tel. 582 5051	
Alcoholics Anonymous	
Tel. 736 2952	
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Tel. 583 8989	
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Downtown



Iconic Tupperware Brands seeks Chapter 11 bankruptcy

By W. GRANTHAM-PHILIPS

AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Tupperware Brands, the company that revolutionized food storage decades ago, has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. Orlando, Florida-based Tupperware plans to continue operating during the bankruptcy proceedings and will seek court approval for a sale, "in order to protect its iconic brand," the company said just before midnight on Tuesday. The company is seeking bankruptcy protection amid growing struggles to revitalize its business. Tupperware sales growth improved some during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, but overall sales have been in steady decline since 2018 due to rising competition. And financial troubles have continued to pile up for the company.

Doubts around Tupperware's future have floated around for some time. Last year, the company sought additional financing as it warned investors about its ability to stay in business and its risk of being delisted from the New York Stock Exchange.

The company received an additional non-compliance notice from the NYSE



Colorful Tupperware products are seen in Bellflower, Calif. on Aug. 5, 2011.

Associated Press

for failing to file its annual results with the Securities and Exchange Commission earlier this year. And Tupperware had continued to warn about its ability to stay afloat in more recent months, with an August securities filing pointing to "significant liquidity challenges." In Tuesday's bankruptcy petition, Tupperware reported more than \$1.2 billion in total debts and \$679.5 million in total assets. Shares for the company have fallen 75% this year and closed Tuesday

at about 50 cents apiece. "The reality is that the decline at Tupperware is not new," Neil Saunders, managing director of Global-Data, said in Wednesday commentary. "It is very difficult to see how the brand can get back to its glory days."

Saunders explained that many consumers have been migrating to cheaper home storage brands noting that competition has intensified over years, particularly with the rise of online platforms like Temu

and retailers like Target also beefing up their own home storage and kitchenware brands. Tupperware's roots date back to 1946. According to the company's website, shortly after the Great Depression, chemist Earl Tupper found inspiration while creating molds at a plastics factory setting out on a mission to create an airtight seal for a plastic container, similar to that on a paint can, to help families save money on food waste. The brand experienced explosive growth in the mid

20th century particularly with the rise of Tupperware parties, first held in 1948. Tupperware parties notably gave many women a chance to run their own businesses out of their homes, selling the products within social circles.

The system worked so well that Tupperware eventually removed its products from stores. And in Tuesday's bankruptcy announcement, the company maintained that there were no current changes to Tupperware's independent sales consultant agreements.

According to court documents published Tuesday, Tupperware currently employs more than 5,450 employees across 41 countries and additionally partners with global sales force of over 465,000 consultants who sell products on a freelance basis in nearly 70 countries.

Tuesday's announcement also pointed to aims to "further advance Tupperware's transformation into a digital-first, technology-led company," possibly signaling a move toward increased reliance of sales on the brand's website or perhaps more online-focused marketing, although the company did not provide exact specifics. □

Google wins legal bid to overturn 1.5 billion euro antitrust fine in EU digital ad case

By KELVIN CHAN

AP Business Writer

LONDON (AP) — Google won a court challenge on

Wednesday against a 1.49 billion euro (\$1.66 billion) European Union antitrust fine imposed five years ago



In this April 17, 2007 file photo, exhibitors work on laptop computers in front of an illuminated sign of the Google logo at the industrial fair Hannover Messe in Hanover, Germany.

Associated Press

that targeted its online advertising business. The EU's General Court said it was throwing out the 2019 penalty imposed by the European Commission, which is the 27-nation bloc's top antitrust enforcer.

"The General Court annuls the Commission's decision in its entirety," the court said in a press release. The commission's ruling applied to a narrow portion of Google's ad business: ads that the U.S. tech giant sold next to Google search results on third-party websites.

Regulators had accused Google of inserting exclusivity clauses in its contracts that barred these

websites from running similarly placed ads sold by Google's rivals. The commission said when it issued the penalty that Google's behavior resulted in advertisers and website owners having less choice and likely facing higher prices that would be passed on to consumers.

But the General Court said the commission "committed errors" when it assessed those clauses.

The commission failed to demonstrate that Google's contracts deterred innovation, harmed consumers or helped the company hold on to and strengthen its dominant position in national online search adver-

tising markets, it said. The ruling can be appealed, but only on points of law, to the Court of Justice, the bloc's top court.

The commission said in a brief statement that it "will carefully study the judgment and reflect on possible next steps."

Google said it changed its contracts in 2016 to remove the provisions in question, even before the commission imposed its decision.

"We are pleased that the court has recognised errors in the original decision and annulled the fine," Google said in a statement.

"We will review the full decision closely." □

Brewers outperform preseason expectations again to win third NL Central title in four years

By STEVE MEGARGEE

AP Sports Writer

MILWAUKEE (AP) — These aren't the same Milwaukee Brewers who have made regular playoff appearances the last several years.

Milwaukee became the first major league team to clinch a division championship Wednesday when it sealed its third NL Central title in the last four years. The Chicago Cubs' 5-3 loss to the Oakland Athletics enabled the Brewers to wrap up the division crown.

This marks the Brewers' sixth postseason berth in the last seven years, a remarkable accomplishment for a team that made the playoffs just twice in a 35-year stretch from 1983-2017. But this run to the playoffs has been a little different from the rest.

Although the Brewers have grown accustomed to outperforming preseason expectations, the odds seemed stacked against them even more than usual this year.

Craig Counsell, the winningest manager in Brewers history, left for the rival Cubs. Corbin Burnes, the 2021 NL Cy Young Award winner, was traded to the



Milwaukee Brewers' William Contreras reacts after hitting a two-run scoring double during the third inning of a baseball game against the Philadelphia Phillies Monday, Sept. 16, 2024, in Milwaukee.

Associated Press

Baltimore Orioles.

Two-time All-Star right-hander Brandon Woodruff didn't pitch all year as he recovered from shoulder surgery and two-time NL reliever of the year Devin Williams missed the first half of the season with stress fractures in his back. All-Star outfielder Christian Yelich and pitchers Wade Miley and Robert Gasser suffered

season-ending injuries.

None of it mattered.

The Brewers took over first place for good at the end of April and never looked back. They lived up to the comments Yelich made at spring training amid speculation Milwaukee would take a step backward without Counsell.

"Even when we've been good these last few years,

no one ever picks us to be good just because we're the Brewers," Yelich said at the time.

"It is what it is. But I think we have a chance to really surprise some people with the talent in this room." That's just what they've done.

The Brewers benefited from the leadership of Pat Murphy, who had been Counsell's bench coach since

2016. Rather than following Counsell to Chicago, Murphy stayed in Milwaukee and got his first full-time opportunity as a major league manager two weeks before his 65th birthday. Murphy's only previous MLB managerial experience had come as an interim manager with San Diego in 2015.

Murphy has kept the locker room loose while guiding a team that hasn't suffered more than three straight losses at any point this season. The Brewers are the only team that hasn't had a losing streak of at least four games.

"I heard about what people were saying," Murphy said this week. "A lot of people laughed at us, (said) this is a rebuild, said things like that."

The Brewers never agreed with that assessment. They knew they had enough to contend.

"You look at the names of the guys in this locker room," third baseman Joey Ortiz said. "We've got Christian Yelich, Willy Adames, (William) Contreras, Rhys Hoskins great leaders on this team making sure we're locked in every single day." □

FIFA teams up with UN health agency for campaign to educate world soccer about concussion

GENEVA (AP) — FIFA teamed up with the World Health Organization on Wednesday for a campaign to educate the soccer industry about the risks of concussion injuries.

"Concussion is a public health issue of concern at all levels of football, and many other sports, requiring greater levels of awareness and action," WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a statement.

Ten years after the alarming case in the 2014 World Cup final of Germany player Christoph Kramer, world soccer governing body FIFA is sending a toolkit to each of its 211 national federations to help teach

at all levels of soccer that symptoms of a head injury can take up to 72 hours to appear.

Kramer continued to play in the final against Argentina for 14 minutes after being injured despite being in clear distress.

Match referee Nicola Rizzoli later said he alerted Germany players after Kramer asked if he was playing in the final.

At the 2022 World Cup, Iran goalkeeper Ali Beiranvand was treated for several minutes on the field after clashing heads with a teammate, then continued to play on against England before finally being replaced.

FIFA favors letting teams

make an extra substitution to remove immediately a player with a suspected head injury. That lets team medical staff evaluate injuries at length without the pressure of trying to send players back into the game.

At soccer's rules-making panel, known as IFAB, FIFA has consistently blocked proposals to allow temporary substitutions that would let injured players with a suspected concussion be assessed just for several minutes before potentially returning to the game. FIFA medical advice is that symptoms can take up to 72 hours to develop.

"The symptoms of a concussion can change or evolve

within the minutes, hours, days and even weeks after the traumatic event," FIFA said of the new "Suspect

and Protect" campaign. "No match is worth the risk." □



Iran's goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand reacts after sustaining an injury during the World Cup group B soccer match between England and Iran at the Khalifa International Stadium in Doha, Qatar, on Nov. 21, 2022.

Associated Press



WNBA commissioner Cathy Engelbert speaks to the media before the WNBA basketball draft on Monday, April 15, 2024, in New York.

Associated Press

By DOUG FEINBERG
AP Basketball Writer

The WNBA is headed back to Portland, with Oregon's biggest city getting an expansion team that will begin play starting in 2026.

The team will be owned and operated by Raj Sports, led by Lisa Bhathal Merage and Alex Bhathal. They paid \$125 million for the franchise.

"This is huge for Portland.

WNBA awards Portland an expansion franchise that will begin play in 2026

We are so honored and humbled to be the vessel that delivers this WNBA franchise to Portland," Lisa Bhathal said. "And that's really how we consider ourselves. Portland is this incredibly diverse, enthusiastic community. We saw the passion first-hand when we started looking into the Portland Thorns and this is Basketball City. So we're very excited about the future."

The Bhathals started having conversations with the WNBA late last year after a separate bid to bring a team to Portland fell through.

"I think from our perspective, knowing that the league was interested in coming to Portland, gave

us confidence that pursuing the opportunity would be well received by the league," Alex Bhathal said. "The idea of expanding our footprint in Portland and being able to create a platform focused on women's sports in the Portland market and really being able to put the foothold and to put a stake in the ground in Portland and make the mark as the epicenter of a global women's sport market is something that was really compelling and interesting to us and very deserving by the community of Portland."

It's the third expansion franchise the league will add over the next two years, with Golden State and To-

ronto getting the other two. The Golden State Valkyries will begin play next season and Toronto in 2026.

"It's nice to have the Pacific Northwest kind of locked in now," WNBA Commissioner Cathy Engelbert said.

Engelbert has said she hopes to have more teams by 2028 but doesn't think that the league will be adding any more that will start playing before 2027.

Portland had a WNBA team, the Fire, from 2000 until 2002 when it folded. That franchise averaged more than 8,000 fans when games were played at the Rose Garden. The new franchise will play at the Moda Center — home of the NBA's Trail Blazers. The Bhathals will build a dedicated practice facility for the team as well.

The Bhathal family brings more than 50 years of experience in professional sports, including serving as co-owners of the Sacramento Kings and the controlling owners of the Portland Thorns of the NWSL.

Portland has been a strong supporter of women's sports from the stellar college teams at Oregon and Oregon State to the Thorns. The Bhathals bought the soccer team for \$63 million earlier this year. The franchise is averaging more than 18,000 fans this season.

The city also had the first bar dedicated to women's sports — The Sports Bra.

"When you look at our numbers, not just the Thorns' off-the-charts attendance, which is incredible, what you've seen, in Eugene, what you've seen in Oregon State, we knew that this was going to be one of the great moments in sports for Oregon," U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden said. "We saw, February of 2023, what was possible. So I can tell you that right now there are women playmaking in Portland. They're rebounding in Roseburg, they're hooping in Hermiston. Every nook and cranny of our state is into this." □



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